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ABSTRACT

In 1972, the University of Pittsburgh initiated the University External Studies Program (UESP). The program emerged from a recognition of the university's responsibility to provide higher education to those previously unable to attend classes because of family or job responsibilities, geographic isolation, or limited mobility. This paper outlines UESP in terms of its mission, generic classification, organizational structure, selected program data, and supplementary projects. Next, the internal operation of UESP is described in terms of five functional components: curriculum development, marketing, production, student support, and evaluation. The UESP support system consists of the four functional components that complement the central program focus: curriculum development. (Author/KE)

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UNIVERSITY EXTERNAL STUDIES PROGRAM

THE SUPPORT SYSTEM

a paper presented to the

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INTRODUCTION

This paper will first provide a descriptive overview of the University External Studies Program (UESP) and, second, will detail the operation of the support elements deemed to be instrumental in the success of the Program.* Support elements are defined as those functional components required to complement the central focus of UESP: curriculum development. The remaining papers in this symposium will deal with various aspects of the curriculum development process.

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* Portions of this paper have been excerpted from the January - May, 1975 Status Report of the University External Studies Program, University of Pittsburgh.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

Prior to explanation of the support system, UESP will be described according to mission, classification, organization, Program data, and supplementary projects.

MISSION

In 1972, the University of Pittsburgh initiated the University External Studies Program (UESP). This off-campus studies program has worked primarily with the School of General Studies, the evening undergraduate college of the University, which offers a broad range of undergraduate programs for adult students.

The Program emerged from a recognition of the University's responsibility to provide higher education to those previously unable to attend classes because of family or job responsibilities, geographic isolation, or limited mobility. The data collected thus far from the student population indicates that this mission is being achieved. The average age of the UESP student is 31 years, compared with 24 years for students enrolled in on-campus evening classes, indicating that a significantly different population is being served. Most of the students are married and hold full-time jobs. The majority of them report that they are unable to obtain college credit in any other way.

UESP enables those who can't attend classes on a regular basis to earn college credits at home equal to the credits earned by students enrolled in on-campus evening classes. All courses are specially developed for off-campus study. The required materials are included in a single package or series of packaged units. Students complete course materials at home, and attend only three on-campus workshops during the term.

UESP offers degree credit courses on the undergraduate and post-baccalaureate levels, in addition to career development courses (non-degree credit). Students may take courses for credit, or simply for personal enrichment. While it is not currently possible to earn a degree solely by taking External Studies courses, degree programs within the School of General Studies are being developed in applied economics and urban management. All but three of the credits necessary to complete a major in economics will be developed as of Fall 1975.

Program Classification

The University External Studies Program is in a genre of external degree programs which includes such programs as:

The Program at Governors State University
The British Open University
The U.S. Transplants of the British Open University

It is included in the genre because:

A. Courses are developed by a team consisting of one or more faculty members, a curriculum specialist, format specialist, and student support specialist. Extensive instructional packages emerge from this effort.

B. The focus is on full academic degrees.

C. The Program provides instruction. (This is in contrast to programs that simply evaluate and/or advise students.)

D. Courses are developed on a structured curriculum model. (The model grew out of a decade of research by the University's Learning Research and Development Center.)

E. It includes provision for face-to-face instruction. (Course materials are augmented by three intensive Saturday on-campus workshops per course.)

F. The instructional model provides students with flexibility in rate, time, place, and mode of learning.

It is distinct from the other exemplars of the genre in that:

A. Courses are developed that are equivalent counterparts to conventionally-taught courses. The Program uses exclusively the regular faculty, both to develop and to conduct the courses.

B. Courses are interchangeable for degree purposes with the on-campus course counterparts.

C. Students have direct contact with the primary faculty developer of the course. In addition, students maintain close telephone and mail contact with their professors and student support specialists on the UESP staff.

D. Course requirements and admission standards are consistent with on-campus programs.

Organizational Structure

The Director of the University External Studies Program reports directly to the Provost of the University, who in turn is advised by an Advisory Council. The UESP Advisory Council is chaired by the Dean of the School of General Studies; its membership consists of ten faculty and administrators representing various parts of the University. This diverse membership facilitates the functioning of UESP as a University - wide instructional service.

The Program is divided organizationally into three areas:

1. Program Administration
2. Program and Curriculum Development
3. Student Support

The major functions of each area are:

1. Program Administration

   a. personnel (administrative staff)
   b. program budgets
   c. production of course materials
   d. marketing
   e. inter-university relations
   f. office management

2. Program and Curriculum Development

   a. personnel (professional staff)
   b. development of materials
   c. Program and course evaluation
   d. faculty and departmental relations
   e. instructional research
   f. proposal writing
   g. monitoring student progress
   h. intra-university relations
   i. Program development

3. Student Support

   a. student relations and communications
   b. organization and implementation of testing system
   c. organization of all student services needed at workshops
   d. student registration and orientation
   e. inquiry response

PROGRAM DATA

STUDENT BACDGROUND

In the Spring and Fall terms of 1974, 620 students responded to the Background Information Form (BIF). The age breakdown of these students is indicated below. The average age works out to slightly over 31 years; this compares with an average age at the University of 20-21 years for day students and 24 years for evening students.

Age Group	Group Size	Group Percentage
Under 21	45	8%
21-30	274	46%
31-40	142	23%
41-50	98	16%
51+	40	7%

Fall term students were asked on the BIF to indicate why they were taking UESP courses, rather than traditional courses.

Of the students who responded. . .

38% indicated that the hours they work do not permit on-campus classes.

36% indicated a time conflict between on-campus classes and their personal schedule.

36% indicated that family responsibilities make regular attendance difficult.

18% indicated that they have too far to travel to on-campus classes.

18% indicated they prefer to learn independently.

13% indicated that courses they wanted were not offered elsewhere.

PROGRAM GROWTH/ENROLLMENT

Through the Winter Term, 1975, the following courses have been developed.

Department	Course Title	Level	Credits
Urban Management (Degree Major)	Public Management: Theory and Practice (812)	Undergraduate	3
	Governmental Framework (815)	Undergraduate	3
	Urban Financial Administration (831)	Undergraduate	3
	Problem Analysis and Decision Making (811)	Undergraduate	3
	Social Issues in Urban Management (801)	Undergraduate	3
	Administration of Local Public Services (822)	Undergraduate	3
	Public Personnel Administration (848)	Undergraduate	3
Economics (Degree Major)	Introduction to Economics (780)	Undergraduate	3
	Labor Economics (766)	Undergraduate	3

Department	Course Title	Level	Credits
Economics (cont'd)	Business, Government, and the Economy (852)	Undergraduate	3
	Introduction to Price Theory (712)	Undergraduate	3
	International Economics (737)	Undergraduate	3
	Consumerism (857)	Undergraduate	3
	Introduction to National Income Theory (711)	Undergraduate	3
	Banking (743)	Undergraduate	3
History	Decline and Fall of Modern Europe (819)	Undergraduate	3
	Atoms, Stars and Man (881)	Undergraduate	3
Administration of Justice	Law and Morality (807)	Undergraduate	3
	Fundamentals of Criminology (701)	Undergraduate	3
Psychology	Social Psychology (721)	Undergraduate	3
	Introduction to Psychology (780)	Undergraduate	3
Curriculum and Supervision	Design and Development of Curricular Materials (850)	Post-baccalaureate	9
	Supervision in Education (880)	Post-baccalaureate	9
Special Education	Teaching Children With Needs (895)	Post-baccalaureate	3
Educational Psychology	Applications of Psychological Theory to Classroom Teaching (895)	Post-baccalaureate	3
Sociology	Introduction to Sociology (785)	Undergraduate	3
	Social Role and Social Self (782)	Undergraduate	3

Department	Course Title	Level	Credits
English	Expository Writing (701)	Undergraduate	3
Fine Arts	Masterpieces in Painting (785)	Undergraduate	3
Mathematics	College Algebra (703A)	Undergraduate	2
	Trigonometry (703B)	Undergraduate	2
	Calculus I (722)	Undergraduate	4
	Calculus II (723)	Undergraduate	4
Library Science (Certificate Program)	Introduction to Para-professional Library Science (991)	Career Development	3
	Audio-Visual Methods (996)	Career Development	3
	Cataloging (993)	Career Development	3
	Acquisitions (992)	Career Development	3
	Administration (994)	Career Development	3
Physics	Energy: A Technological Ethical or Moral Crisis (863)	Undergraduate/ Post-baccalaureate	3
German	Level I Conversational German (711)	Undergraduate	3
	Level II Conversational German (712)	Undergraduate	3
	Level III Conversational German (713)	Undergraduate	3
	Level IV Conversational German (714)	Undergraduate	3
Women Studies	Work and Life Planning for Women (810)	Undergraduate	3

The following courses are currently under development.

English	Analytical Writing (702)	Undergraduate	3
Economics	Statistics (705)	Undergraduate	3
	Banking and Financial Markets (744)	Undergraduate	3

Department	Course Title	Level	Credits
Urban Management	Statistics (810)	Undergraduate	3
Fine Arts	Masterpieces of Western Painting Part II (786)	Undergraduate	3
Library Science	Information Systems (999)	Career Development	3

Enrollments in the Program have continued to increase in response to the growth in course development, as indicated in the table below.

Course Development/Enrollment Progress

	Fall 72	Winter 73	Spring 73	Fall 73	Winter 74	Spring 74	Fall 74	Winter 75
Enrollments	131	180	97	499	543	653	773	800 (est.)
Total Courses Offered	5	8	3	15	17	18	23	27
Newly Developed Courses Offered	5	5	1	8	7	6	7	9

FINANCIAL ASPECTS

In fiscal year 1972-73 the Program received a budget of $150,000; in 1973-74 this was increased to $200,000. This year's budget is $353,500.

Of the total budget dollar to be spent in FY 1974-75, 73% will be invested directly into the development and teaching of courses, 19% will be subsumed into Program administration, and 8% will be used for promotion and public relations. The total cost of developing each new course will be approximately $4,550 compared to $3,600 for the cost of teaching a course once it has been developed.

SUPPLEMENTARY PROJECTS

INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT SERVICE (ISDS)

Since the summer of 1973, UESP has been functioning as the office of implementation for the University of Pittsburgh's participation in the ISDS project with the two other Commonwealth Universities: Penn State and Temple. The mission of ISDS is the cooperative development of courses that reach the remote student through the utilization of public television and other media forms. The project has been funded internally by each university for $50,000 per year for FY 1975-77. The first two courses offered in January of 1975 are both products of UESP -- one in education, the other in history. The history course, History 881 -- Atoms, Stars, and Man, is offered at ten other campuses in Pennsylvania at the same time it is being taught at Pitt. The television component for this course is the PBS program, The Ascent of Man. Additional courses will be developed and taught by all three Universities as the project progresses. ISDS is expected to generate sufficient tuition revenues over the next three years to recover the costs of development and teaching. The project has also provided the means for Pitt and its local PBS affiliate, WQED-TV, to develop a close working relationship that promises to benefit both institutions in and beyond ISDS.

Motivated by the ISDS project, the Pennsylvania Public Television Network (PPTN) has earmarked $150,000 for higher education in 1974-75 in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Of the funds, $34,000 has already been committed to the statewide implementation of History 881. PPTN funding of additional ISDS projects is anticipated.

LONG TERM HEALTH CARE

The Graduate School of Public Health of the University has received a $480,000 grant from HEW to develop a Long Term Health Care Major in External Studies. The planning for the curriculum is now underway.

PARAPROFESSIONAL LIBRARY SCIENCE

The State Librarian of Pennsylvania has awarded a $7,100 grant to offer three courses in the Paraprofessional Library Science Program for his staff in Harrisburg. The grant expires during the end of the Winter term 1975. Indications are that the grant may be extended into the future.

THE UESP SUPPORT SYSTEM

The internal operation of UESP requires the performance of five major tasks. These represent the functional components of the Program; they are identified as curriculum development, marketing, production, student support, and evaluation. Curriculum development is primary; all other components act either in response to or support of curriculum development. The remainder of this paper is devoted to an explanation of the supportive role of these other components. The curriculum development function is viewed from various perspectives in the related papers of this Symposium on External Studies.

MARKETING

Approximately one third of the enrollments in UESP each term result from the promotional program implemented for that term. An outside consultant assists the Program Director in the planning and implementation of marketing strategies. The marketing program for each term is thoroughly evaluated to determine which methods of advertising are the most cost-effective. The principal sources of new student inquiries and

enrollments have been from newspaper advertising, magazine advertising, direct mail flyers, posters with return mail cards, letters to special interest groups, public service announcements on television, and news releases.

PRODUCTION

The preparation for each new academic term places intense pressure on the course production function of UESP. Three manuscript typists and one production supervisor are responsible for the typing of an average of seven new course Study Guides per term and ten revisions. Many courses are printed as well as typed in the office. In addition to the Study Guides and their corresponding examinations, a multitude of student forms, special reports and course materials are produced. Most of the work performed in production must conform to rigid standards of format, quality and scheduling. In order to meet these standards a highly skilled production staff is maintained. This staff is supported by specialized equipment such as the IBM Mag Card I and II typewriter, IBM self-correcting typewriters, the Xerox 2400 copier, and the Xerox 3600 copier in conjunction with a Pitney Bowes 100-bin automatic sorter.

Operational efficiency is more critical for this functional component than for any other. The production staff is frequently at the mercy of faculty developers who cannot always meet deadlines for draft submission, even though production deadlines must be met to have Study Guides ready for the first class meeting of a new course. This is difficult to achieve while still producing high quality materials, and while maintaining cost effectiveness.

STUDENT SUPPORT

Students who study in a non-conventional manner remote from the main campus have special needs for administrative and academic services beyond those normally provided. Many of these services are provided by the UESP Student Support staff. These services include: (1) responding to several thousand mail and telephone inquires each year and maintaining detailed records of these inquiries, (2) processing all student registrations, (3) conducting student orientation, (4) coordinating Saturday workshop activities, (5) maintaining a student communication network, including a bi-weekly newsletter, (6) planning for the distribution and administration of supervised examinations, (7) collection of grades and submission to Registrar, and numerous other tasks intended to facilitate student progress. The way in which these services are performed, and in some cases the mere existence of the services, distinguish the UESP-student relationship from that occurring in many other external degree programs. For this reason, these services are expanded on below.

STUDENT INQUIRIES

The marketing effort each term results in between 2000 to 3000 inquiries from prospective students. Inquiries normally take one of three forms: response coupon, letter, and telephone. Paid advertising in newspapers, magazines and special flyers always contain a response coupon. This inquiry form accounts for about 60% of all inquiries received. The coupon enables the inquiry clerk to pinpoint the source (advertising medium), enables the inquirer to indicate whether he/she wishes an application kit or simply more information, and frequently asks the inquirer to give their phone number if they wish to be called by a member of the staff to discuss the Program. Letter inquiries represent 5% of total inquiries. The remaining 35% of student inquiries come in the form of telephone calls received during working hours at the UESP Office (15%) or in the evenings and on weekends by

a personalized answering service (20%). A patterned inquiry record form is used to make sure that all pertinent information is requested by the staff member or operator taking the call. An elaborate system has been designed to classify, code, respond to, and follow-up each inquiry.

STUDENT REGISTRATIONS

UESP students may register by mail or in-person up to a few days prior to the first class. All registrations are processed in the UESP office. At the first class, students and the faculty member are provided with a complete name and address class roster to encourage the formation of student study teams and car pools. The UESP registration system is currently undergoing computerization to facilitate roster construction, special mailings to students, and the collection of course data.

STUDENT ORIENTATION

The adult student entering a non-conventional program in a highly conventional university often requires more easing into the university than does the younger, more flexible day student. An extensive student orientation package (SOP) is developed each term to help prevent "academic shock". The SOP tells students what to expect and what to accomplish the first day; what Study Guides and textbooks are required for each class and how to purchase them; where and when to take course examinations; how to pay tuition or drop a course, if necessary; what they should know about services available to them as university students; how to find their way around the campus; and who to call if they encounter any sort of administrative or academic difficulty.

UESP continues to develop resources, alternatives, and support systems which will meet in a very practical way the learning needs of its present and future students. Progress in this area is represented by three special projects; 1) how to study manual for students; 2) academic skills project; and 3) library supplements. A study manual entitled "On Your Own,

But Not Alone" answers major questions and responds to some of the misgivings adult students often bring to an External Studies course. Specific tips on reading effectively, budgeting time, improving concentration and recognizing study problems are offered to the student. Designing and identifying materials and resources most appropriate to learning-to-learn skills is the focus of the academic skills project. Once identified and/or designed, these materials will be added to the study manual. The procedures for the final project, library supplements, involves placing in those local libraries which act as UESP testing facilities supplementary texts to which students, for one reason or another , would not have access.

WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

Complete support services are provided to instructors. Prior to each Saturday workshop they are given a "podium package", containing student rosters, handouts requested by the faculty member, and special instructions to students. The UESP student support staff also arranges for workshop audio visual services.

Other workshop activities that must be planned and coordinated are refreshments (coffee and doughnuts in the morning; soda and pretzels inthe afternoon), Study Guide sales to students, opening of certain University offices by special UESP request, staffing of information/ registration booths, and scheduling of classrooms.

COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

Since UESP courses require so few on-campus meetings, special attention has been given to facilitating and maximizing other communications options among students, instructors, and the UESP staff.

Instructors

The instructor's phone number and information about the best times to call are included in each Study Guide. Students are encouraged to call

their instructor with any questions, comments or problems relative to course content. For questions and comments that do not require a same-day response, self-mailers are included with Study Guides. Exams and assignments are evaluated as soon as they are received, and returned promptly so that students can apply this feedback as they progress through the course. Instructors often use the UESP newsletter to communicate with students between workshops.

UESP Staff

The UESP staff is available to assist students with procedural problems they may encounter. In urgent situations staff members can be reached at home via the 24 hour answering service. The UESP newsletter, the Extension Chord, published six times a term, is the major communications link between the staff and students. It provides vital program and course information as well as articles of special interest. Students are encouraged to contribute items for publication.

Other Students

Students are provided with a roster of names and addresses of students in their courses; many exchange phone numbers. Students find it valuable and enjoyable to form small, informal study groups. Some groups invite the instructor to join them for informal class sessions.

ADMINISTRATION OF EXAMINATIONS

Some UESP courses require several exams, others only one; some are supervised, others are take-home. For a few courses, exams are given only on prescribed days. Exams for most courses can be scheduled by the student.

Supervised Examinations

Supervised examinations are usually taken at one of thirteen UESP testing centers throughout Western Pennsylvania. Otside of the testing center at the main campus and on Pitt's four regional campuses, all testing centers are located in public libraries of communities where most students

are concentrated. Students who live far away from a UESP testing center may opt for a proctor system arranged with a professional person in their community.

Students are asked at the beginning of the term to select one center where they will take supervised examinations. Next, a complex distribution system goes into operation to insure that the right exams for the right people are sent to the right testing center. Continual liaison is maintained with the testing centers to insure that tests are properly administered.

UESP is in the early stages of formulating a proposal to both extend the educational outreach and increase the educational effectiveness of the Program through some form of external learning centers. The same public libraries now used for supervised testing may serve as locations for the first learning centers.

EVALUATION

PURPOSE

The U.E.S.P. evaluation plan is designed to assess how well the Program is achieving its stated goals and to revise, improve and update Program procedures and products.

DOMAIN

The evaluation process examines the five program components in terms of goals, procedures and products of each.

1. Curriculum Development
2. Marketing
3. Production
4. Student Support
5. Evaluation

PROCESS

Based on the Lindwall-Cox model for evaluation. This process involves:

1. Statement and Analysis of Program Goals

The statement of Program goals is based largely on the recommendation of the Chancellor's Task Force on External Studies. Analysis of the Program goals is based on the following criteria: feasibility, validity, consistency and assessability.

2. Design of the Plan for Evaluation

The evaluation plan includes specification of methods for assessing each of the Program goals, procedures and products. It also includes selection or design of specific evaluation instruments.

3. Implementation of the Evaluation Plan

Implementation of the plan consists of actual data collection.

4. Analysis on Feedback of Evaluation Data

The results of data analysis are used summatively to assess how well the Program is achieving its stated goals. They are used formatively to direct or redirect Program efforts and to provide feedback for improving Program components, procedures and products.

PROCEDURES

In order to implement the evaluation process, the U.E.S.P. evaluation staff has created specialized instruments of the following types:

1. Student Surveys are used to collect data from a large population. Some examples are:

   a. Background Information Form--collects biographical and demographic information about students for use in planning, marketing and course development. The tabulation and analysis of data from this form has been computerized.

   b. Course Evaluation Form--assesses student opinion concerning the quality of specific course and Program components for use in the evaluation and revision of courses. These data are collected from all students in every course each term. The tabulation and analysis of data from this form is currently being computerized.

c. Unit Rating Sheet--obtains data for intensive formative evaluation of discrete components of individual courses.

d. Student Opinion Survey--used to determine why students fail to re-enroll after taking one or more U.E.S.P. courses.

e. Exit Form--administered to all students who drop or withdraw from a U.E.S.P course. It helps to identify needed course or Program modifications.

f. Inquiry Form--collects data regarding the promotional and geographical sources of inquiries. This information is useful to improve promotional and advertising procedures.

2. Review by Experts solicits the analysis and opinion of qualified specialists for evaluation of course content and structure, and of developmental procedures. Some examples are:

   a. Faculty Review of Developmental Process--provides information from each participating faculty member regarding the specific development procedures used.

   b. Content Specialist Review--yields formative data regarding the specific content for a given course.

   c. Curriculum Specialist Review--provides information regarding the theoretical validity of the methods, instructional strategies, use of media, and organization for a given course.

3. Informal and Anecdotal Records provide data for the analysis and evaluation of internal central staff processes, individual courses, and external opinions and reactions to various Program components.

In order to save valuable staff time and to allow the use of sophisticated and flexible statistical techniques on the large amount of data collected each term, the UESP evaluation staff is currently designing and implementing a plan to utilize computer technology for evaluation. To date, two of the student survey forms have been computerized and several others are being considered.

SUMMARY

The University External Studies Program has been outlined in terms of its mission, generic classification, organizational structure, selected Program data, and supplementary projects. Next, the internal operation

of UESP was described in terms of five functional components: curriculum development, marketing, production, student support, and evaluation. The UESP support system consists of the four functional components that complement the central Program focus: curriculum development.